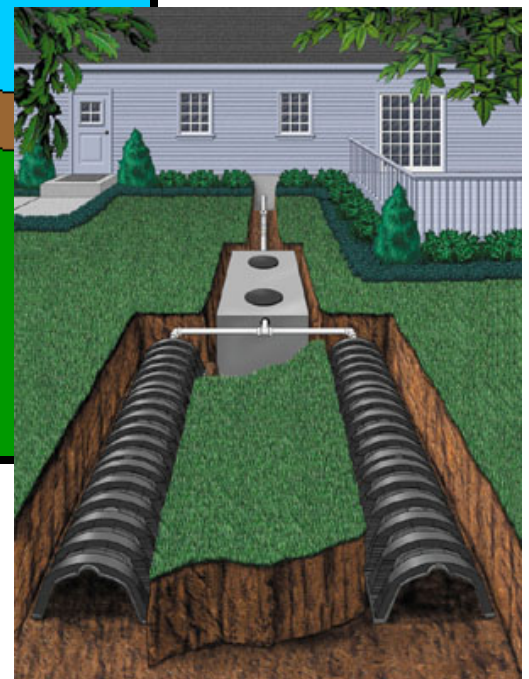
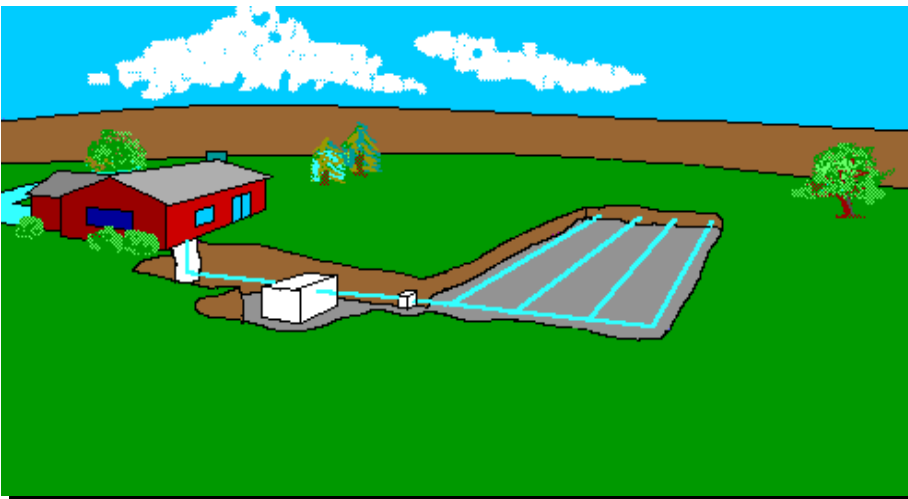
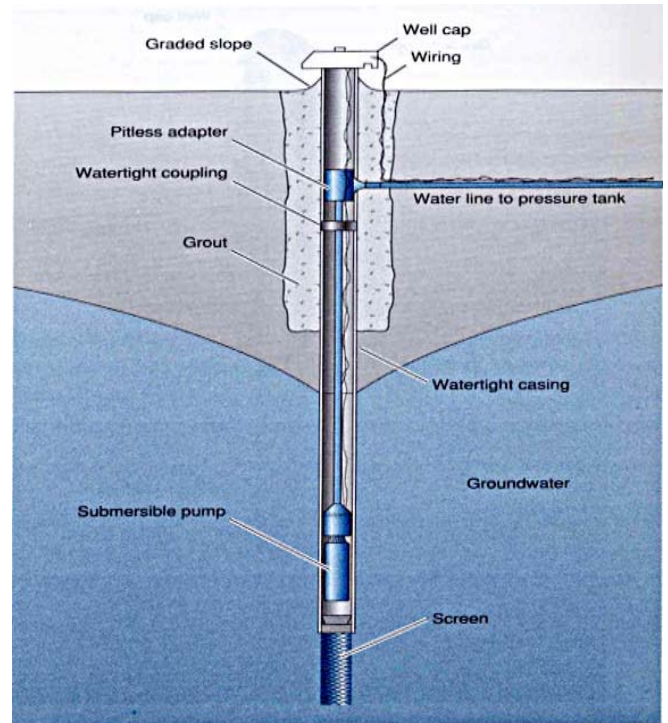


Source Water Protection Program to Provide Workshops

By Jeffrey Frank Herrick
DEQ Source Water Protection Program

DEQ Helena – Montana residents, real estate agents, businessmen, city managers, and planning groups have been attending free educational workshops offered by DEQ. The workshop continues to be presented in other counties across the state. These workshops cover how to manage domestic Septic and Water Well Systems. The training is generally provided by DEQ Source Water Protection staff and sanitarians in the various counties where the training is held. Many of these workshops have already occurred and more are planned as requested by local health departments and others. **A free nitrate screening and door prizes may be offered at some of the workshops.**



Regarding the workshops, Joe Meek with the DEQ Source Water Protection Program says,

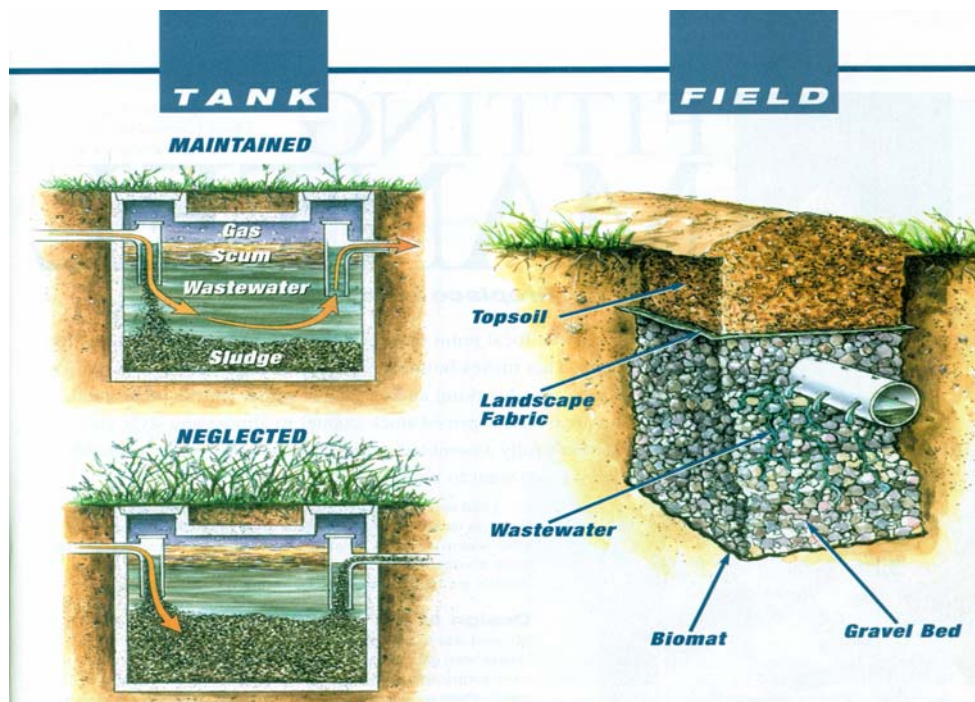
“Residents who rely on private septic systems and/or water wells may be at risk of contaminating groundwater or drinking contaminated water. In addition, areas of increased septic density may affect broader areas of groundwater and surface water. For the most part, the operation of private septic systems and water systems is unregulated, so landowners need to take the proper measures themselves to ensure that their drinking water is safe for consumption and their septic systems are properly maintained.”

Kathy Moore, the acting Environmental Health Director for the Lewis & Clark County Water Quality Protection District, participated in some of the original workshops that were provided in the Helena Valley. Kathy says, *“During the training, we cover how septic systems and wells work and how they should be maintained. We also talked about land-use activities associated with individual pollutants, drinking water standards, and testing of private wells.”*



Other topics that are commonly discussed during the workshops are:

- **hydrogeology**
- **groundwater-surface water interactions**
- **well drilling and construction**
- **well location**
- **well maintenance**
- **septic system types and designs**
- **county restrictions or local rules**
- **septic system location**
- **septic system pumping and maintenance.**

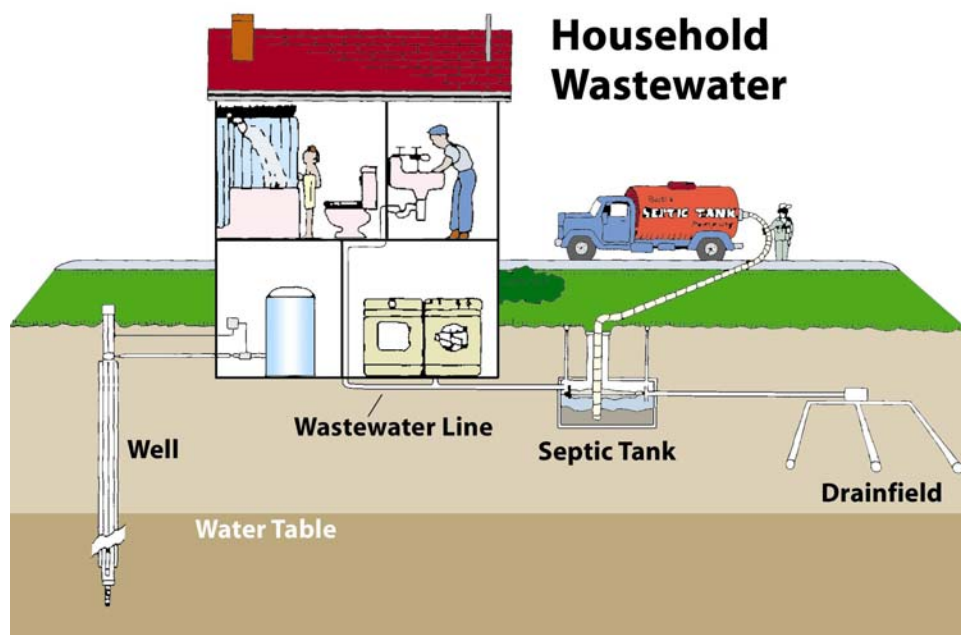


Although the workshops were developed by DEQ, they are readily adapted to address the interests and specific needs of the neighborhoods and communities where the training is held. The training is centered on slide show presentations with lots and lots of good practical examples. The presentations always involve considerable audience participation with questions and answers. The presentations are generally delivered by both DEQ and county staff. These presentations are designed to allow the county representatives to step up and do as much or as little as they desire.



All of the workshops provide:

- good opportunities for the public to ask specific questions of the environmental professionals,
- hands-on examples of well and septic system construction materials, and
- sophisticated educational materials on wells and septic systems and provided in the form of folders to help the system owners understand their systems and track changes to those systems.



Depending on the desires of the meeting host (generally this has been the county or town), the following have been provided to the attendees:

- a free field screening to determine nitrate concentration in any well water samples brought to the workshop, and
- door prizes that consist of a free septic tank pump-out, aerial photo posters, or similar items of value to the attendees.



**These free workshops
continue to be available to
counties, watershed groups,
communities, and other
organizations.**

**To host a workshop, contact
Joe Meek with DEQ at 406/
444-4806.**

